



## *Watertown Unified School District*

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Superintendent of Schools

March 6, 2014

### Hearing Testimony on Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

As the Superintendent of the Watertown Unified School District (WUSD), I am here today on behalf of our school district to advocate for the continued support of the state adoption of the CCSS and our opposition to Senate Bill 619. The WUSD serves approximately 4,000 students in a community of approximately 23,000. Our teachers and administrators have spent the past three years aligning our English Language Arts and math curriculum to the CCSS.

At the beginning of this process there were concerns that this would be an arduous task and that the standards were perhaps too robust or too challenging, and they would force us to think about teaching differently. Since that time, we have come to believe that the CCSS, while still not perfect, are the right answer for the students in our District. The CCSS emphasize the necessary content and skill sets to prepare our students for whatever post-secondary path they choose to pursue while still allowing school districts the flexibility to create appropriate curriculum alignment to meet the unique needs of each District.

In our work over the past three years, we have found the standards to be rigorous, relevant and well-designed. We have also found that we have not needed to restrict the ability of teachers to utilize a variety of instructional practices that work best with their students, and we have been able to continue to respect the art of the craft of teaching. When I am in the classrooms of our math and ELA teachers, I have seen them skillfully employ a variety of different styles and approaches to teaching, but I have also seen commonalities of student engagement and rigorous expectations. The best of those worlds is enhanced by the CCSS.

In addition to support for the CCSS, the huge cost implications of changing the assessment and standards target at this date must be considered. The costs of developing and implementing new standards and developing and implementing a new assessment will be a substantial burden to our taxpayers. In addition to those costs, there will be other significant costs including the adoption of new and supplemental materials and professional development. Also important to consider are the substantial resources, money, time, and energy that has already been invested to align to the CCSS.

Wisconsin has long been a leader in education. In fact, Watertown, Wisconsin, is home to America's first kindergarten. Wisconsin continues to be a leader in graduation rates and ACT test scores and participation levels. Alignment to the CCSS is absolutely critical to continue our role as a leader in the nation. If we do not prepare our students for career and college readiness, we are not adequately serving our students, parents or communities. If we halt our alignment processes to the most rigorous and relevant standards with which we have ever worked, we do our students, parents and communities a great disservice.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Schug  
Superintendent